

# Three Important Movements

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American  
Baptist  
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# Three Important Movements

Campbellism, Mormonism,  
and Spiritualism

By  
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REV. W. A. STANTON, D. D.

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Philadelphia  
American Baptist Publication Society  
Boston      Chicago      Atlanta  
New York      St. Louis      Dallas

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Published August, 1907

From the Society's own Press

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# THREE

## IMPORTANT MOVEMENTS

### *Introduction*

IN the second quarter of the nineteenth century three movements have an important place. Each was claimed by its leaders to be a reformation of religion. The earliest was led by Alexander and Thomas Campbell, father and son, and Walter Scott. It gave to the world the "Christian Church," the "Disciples," or as they are called by some, the "Campbellites." The leaders of the second movement were Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith; the result is Mormonism, with its two divisions of those who practise polygamy and those who do not. Thirdly came "Spiritualism," which was born in its modern clothes with the "rappings" of the Fox sisters. With the last this paper has nothing to do. The two prior movements, however, closely associated with the religious history of Pittsburgh and vicinity, are of peculiar local and general interest.

The writer has conscientiously tried to be true to facts as revealed by original manuscripts, by the

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literature of the two "peoples," and by personal interviews with a few still living who were eye-witnesses of some of these things. A citizen of Pittsburgh has decided advantages in writing this story.

It has never before been told as a continuous narrative. We have Baptist history, Disciple history, and Mormon history, but nowhere are said histories published in such a way as that in which this essay presents them. That those who were once Baptists became the founders of the "Christian" denomination is well known, but that one of those "founders" made the "Christian reformation" his half-way house in passing from the Baptists to the Mormons is not so well known. It is still less known that he, and not Joseph Smith, was the real originator and theological father of Mormonism. The scene of action is Pittsburgh, Pa., and its adjacent territory. The alleged discovery of the "golden leaves" by Smith at Manchester, N. Y., was a mere geographical incident.

The "Disciples of Christ" are now busily engaged in preparations for the centennial celebration of the publication of Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address," which they regard as the real beginning of their "restoration movement." This centennial convention is to be held in Pittsburgh in 1909. The reader will note that Mr. Campbell was not immersed until 1812, and then by a Baptist



minister; in 1813 he and his father became members of a Baptist Association, and he at least nominally remained a Baptist until 1829, when the Mahoning Baptist Association formally disbanded as a Baptist organization. It must be true then that for twenty years a cuckoo's egg was in a Baptist nest, that the laying of the egg is to be celebrated rather than its hatching. Mr. Rigdon's egg was in the same Baptist nest, but matured more quickly. Its nature was discovered in about a year, and it was rolled out. With its new environment it took four more years to hatch out and be claimed by Joseph Smith as his bird.

But these things will reveal themselves farther on in the essay. Now for the story.

### *I. Walter Scott*

Walter Scott was born October 31, 1796, in Moffat, Dumfriesshire, Scotland. He was graduated by the University of Edinburgh, and intended to enter the Presbyterian ministry. In 1818 he came to New York City, had a brief Latin tutorship on Long Island, and on May 7, 1819, reached Pittsburgh, Pa. There he became assistant to George Forrester, a fellow-Scotchman, who had an academy.

While teaching, Forrester had gathered a little company of "baptized believers" and organized them into an independent church. They were mostly humble Scotch and Scotch-Irish people; they met

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in the courthouse, and had no relation to the First Baptist Church, which was organized in 1812.

By the influence of Mr. Forrester and his church, Walter Scott was led to such a study of the New Testament that he was immersed by Forrester and joined his church. Not long after, while bathing in the Allegheny River, Mr. Forrester was drowned. Scott became principal of the academy and leader of the church. He also came into possession of much of Forrester's library, which contained the writings of the Haldane brothers, of Sandeman, Glas, Carson, and Wardlaw. Mr. Scott always acknowledged great helpfulness from these books.

The church was known as "Forrester's church," so far as it had a name at all. For a short time the kiss of salutation was given, and they were nicknamed "Kissing Baptists." This custom, as well as "feet washing," was soon abandoned. Among the members were some families that in after years became prominent in the Disciples' church—the Darsies, Erretts, and McLarens.

In 1820 Mr. Scott received a pamphlet issued by a small congregation in New York City, composed mainly of Scotch Baptists, and holding many of the views of the Haldanes. Scott's biographer, William Baxter, says: "In this tract were the germs of what was years afterward insisted upon by Scott in his plea for baptism for the remission of sins, and also by Alexander Campbell in his celebrated 'Extra

on Remission.'” The tract was not seen by Campbell until after Scott had read it.

Mr. Scott was so influenced by it that he closed his school and went to New York to see those who had issued it. He confesses that he was sadly disappointed in finding that their practice was far behind their doctrines. For at least three months he remained among them, but could not persuade them to conform their practice to their tract. He went thence to Paterson, N. J., and found another company of independent believers, but he could not agree with them. Still journeying, he came to Baltimore, where, he says, “I found a few professors of religion in a disorganized condition, but nothing to encourage me to labor among them.” The church was kept alive by two men named Carmen and Ferguson, from whom he learned of a small body of worshipers in Washington to whom he thought he might be of some advantage. He says: “I went thither, and having searched them up, I discovered them so sunken in the mire of Calvinism that they refused to reform; and so finding no pleasure in them, I left them.” In 1821 Mr. Scott returned to Pittsburgh, walking from Washington, feeling that his itinerary had accomplished little, if anything.

He took up his abode with the father of Robert Richardson, who afterwards became the biographer of Alexander Campbell, and whose aged sister Jane, the writer of this paper served as pastor from 1890

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until her death, in 1895. In Mr. Richardson's house Scott reopened his school, and again took up his ministry to the little church that met in the courthouse. His school soon increased from fifteen to one hundred and forty pupils. He desired daily to read and teach the New Testament to the pupils. Most of his patrons were Presbyterians, and preferred that the Westminster Catechism should be taught. There was some discussion, and it was finally decided to lay aside all catechisms and only read the Testament on Saturdays.

During this winter of 1821-1822 Walter Scott, then twenty-five years old, first met Alexander Campbell, who was ten years older. From that meeting we turn to a chapter of early Baptist history in and about Pittsburgh that is essential to an understanding of events that are to follow.

### *II. The Redstone Association*

This Association was organized at Garrard's Ford, October 7, 1776.<sup>1</sup> It was called the Annual Association until 1796. There was then but one other Baptist Association in Pennsylvania—the Philadelphia, organized in 1707. In 1809 the Redstone Association had thirty-three churches, with one thousand three hundred and twenty-three members. In

<sup>1</sup> The churches were Great Bethel (now Uniontown), Goshen (Garrard's Ford), Ten Mile (now North Ten Mile), Turkey Foot in Somerset County, Yough (first formed on the Yough River), Pike Run (now extinct). John Corbly, Moderator; Wm. Wood, Clerk.

## THE REDSTONE ASSOCIATION

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the year 1808 Thomas Campbell organized a company of believers at Brushy Fork into what he called "The Christian Association of Washington." He and his son Alexander were then Presbyterians, and desired this body to be admitted to membership in the Pittsburgh Presbytery. Learning that the Presbytery would not admit them as a "Christian Association," they reorganized as a church in May, 1809, and in October, 1810, applied to the Presbytery for admission. Their application was refused. One year and a half later, June 12, 1812, Alexander Campbell was immersed by a Baptist minister named Mathias Luce. The next year, September, 1813, he and his father, who had also been recently immersed, were received into the Redstone Baptist Association.

In 1855 Rev. James Estep, M. D., preached two sermons in the Peter's Creek Baptist church, near Pittsburgh, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of his ministry. Doctor Estep was born in 1782 and died in 1861. He was baptized in 1802 into the membership of the Peter's Creek church by Elder David Phillips, who also baptized Sidney Rigdon into the membership of the same church. Doctor Estep first met the Campbells at the Association the year in which they were received. He says: "They then maintained with firmness and stability the leading doctrines of the Calvinistic school, but refused to acknowledge any Confession of Faith; at the same time they agreed

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to submit to the most rigid examination of their doctrinal principles that the Association or any of its members might think proper to make. A careful examination was made, and they were received into the Association." The Association appointed Thomas Campbell to write the annual letter, the subject assigned being "The Trinity of Persons in the Godhead." Doctor Estep thought the letter he presented on this subject was "an able and sound production," but he says that Mr. Brownlee of Uniontown objected to it.

The same year in which Alexander Campbell was immersed, 1812, the First Baptist Church in Pittsburgh was organized. Four years later the Redstone Association met at Cross Creek, Brook County, Virginia. Alexander Campbell preached the annual sermon from Rom. 8 : 3, 4. It was published, and evoked severe criticism.

In 1816 the Minutes of the Association show but one Baptist church in Pittsburgh. It had only eight members, and sent as its messenger B. B. Newton.

The following interesting reading is taken from the Minutes of that year :

7. A letter was presented by Brother T. Campbell, from a number of baptized professors in the city of Pittsburgh, requesting union as a church to this Association.

8. Voted, that as this letter is not presented according to the constitution of this Association, the request cannot be granted.



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9. Voted, that Brother Campbell be invited to take a seat in this Association.

10. Voted, that a committee be appointed to wait upon the persons mentioned in the seventh article, to investigate the subject of their letter. Brethren D. Phillips, Luce, and Pritchard are the committee to attend in Pittsburgh, on the Saturday preceding the first Lord's Day in November.

The "baptized professors" whom Thomas Campbell sought to bring into the Association were a company who met regularly in his schoolroom, on Liberty Street, in Pittsburgh. In seeking membership they failed to acknowledge conformity to any articles of faith, and declared adherence to the Scriptures only. While the Baptists themselves accepted the Scriptures as a sufficient rule for faith and practice, the Baptists of the Redstone Association had already learned that a rejection of any formulated statement as to what the Scriptures taught was to be regarded with suspicion, and might open the way for personal interpretations not at all in harmony with the Scriptures as the Baptists understood them. This company of "baptized professors" was distinct from the company to which Walter Scott afterward preached. They had been gathered by Mr. Campbell himself.

### *III. Independent Churches*

From 1816 to 1821 there were at least three independent churches in Pittsburgh, having no

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affiliation with any denomination. One was that organized by George Forrester and continued by Walter Scott. Dr. Robert Richardson, a pupil of both of these men, says of Forrester: "He was a Haldanean preacher and an immersionist." Walter Scott's eldest daughter, Mrs. William Church, of Pittsburgh, says that her father's views were more like those of the Haldanes than of Sandeman, and that his sympathies were with Robert Haldane.

Another of these independent churches was the one that sought admission to the Redstone Association through Thomas Campbell.

The third was known as Tassey's church. It was organized by Robert Tassey, an Irishman, who had been educated for the ministry in one of Haldane's schools in the old country, but who, upon coming to Pittsburgh, went into business. He was not an immersionist, and would not therefore have been in sympathy with either Campbell or Forrester. He gathered a few people, who met for weekly communion and worship. One of his flock was Samuel Church, who had been immersed by Scott, and who will be referred to again. These three independent churches were Haldanean. It was out of them that the Disciple denomination in and about Pittsburgh secured its leaders a few years later. The children and grandchildren of the people in them are to-day among the best-known members of the Disciple churches in Pittsburgh and Allegheny City. These



facts hardly justify the conclusions reached by Professor Whitsitt, formerly of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in his book, "Origin of the Disciples of Christ (Campbellites)." He concludes that they are an "offshoot" of the Sandemanians of Scotland. It is true that Campbell, Scott, and Forrester were all Scotchmen, and that in some things they believed as the Sandemanians did. Doctor Whitsitt enumerates fifteen items of Sandemanian doctrine and practice; he shows that four of those items correspond to four peculiarities of the Disciples. In two other instances he sees a fancied similarity, but it is extremely doubtful whether it is not wholly a fancy. The Disciples of to-day do not require "mutual exhortation as a regular part of religious worship," nor do they "exclude all but communicants from the public services of the church." In the remaining nine particulars, of the fifteen stated by Doctor Whitsitt, there is absolutely no resemblance whatever to present Disciple practice or teaching.

A resemblance in four points out of fifteen, and those four not vital, will hardly justify us in terming one an "offshoot" of the other. Of course Doctor Whitsitt could not have referred to any organic relation between the Sandemanians and the Disciples. Speaking organically, if the Disciples were an "offshoot" of any religious body, it was of the Baptists. They were in organic union with

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the Baptists of western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio until fellowship was withdrawn from them; first by the Redstone Association, in 1826; after that by the Beaver Association, in 1828; and in 1832 by the Dover Association, in Virginia.

Campbell and Scott always insisted that their teachings were the result of unprejudiced, prayerful, personal investigation of the New Testament. Their descendants and the descendants of their contemporaries who studied with them have given me the testimony of personal knowledge as to the truthfulness of that claim. I see no reason to doubt it. I am perfectly willing to admit that Walter Scott read Sandeman's writings; but so did he read Haldane's, Carson's, and Wardlaw's. The surviving children of Scott and of original members of his Pittsburgh church tell me that he was in sympathy with the teachings of Haldane rather than of Sandeman. At the same time they insist that the New Testament was studied by their parents more than were any human books. In their homes, as families; in their places of meeting, as an organization, they would spend hour after hour, night after night, in the study of the New Testament.

#### ***IV. From 1821 until 1827***

We return to the meeting between Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell in the winter of 1821-1822. To their mutual surprise and pleasure they found

that they entertained the same convictions as to much that each thought he was alone in believing. Especially were they agreed as to the remedy for the evils of sectarianism that was then so rampant.

Pittsburgh's First Baptist Church was then nine years old. It had had three pastors: Edward Jones, from 1812 till 1816; Elder Obadiah Newcomb, from that time till 1818; and Elder John Davis, of England, until 1821. Alexander Campbell had supplied the pulpit at times, and through his influence the church called Rev. Sidney Rigdon.

Mr. Rigdon was born February 19, 1793, on a farm about twelve miles south of Pittsburgh, near Library. He was baptized into the membership of Peter's Creek church, May 31, 1817, by Elder David Phillips. In a sermon on "Mormonism Exposed," by Rev. Samuel Williams, who was a successor of Rigdon in the pastorate of the First Church, the author says, "There was so much of the miraculous about Rigdon's conversion, and so much parade about his profession, that the pious and discerning pastor entertained serious doubts, at the time, in regard to the genuineness of the work." Rigdon soon began to put himself forward, sought preeminence, and well-nigh supplanted his faithful pastor. Elder Phillips said, "As long as Rigdon lives he will be a curse to the church of Christ." At the time of his call to Pittsburgh he was living in Warren, Ohio. He had learned the trade of

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printer, but later had been ordained in Ohio, and at one time was pastor of the Baptist church at Sharon, Pa. His pastorate in Pittsburgh began January 28, 1822. The church then had ninety-six members, and that year made its first application for a charter. In the list of trustees signing the application the first name was Sidney Rigdon. The charter was approved by Attorney-General Thomas Elder, October 23; seven days later by the Supreme Judges, William Tilghman and John B. Gibson, and was enrolled December 6, 1822. At this time the church worshiped in a frame meeting-house at the northeast corner of Grant Street and Third Avenue.

The Redstone Association met in Pittsburgh in September, 1822. Both of the Campbells were present and preached their new doctrines. From that time on Rigdon preached as the Campbells did. There was a strong opposition on the part of a minority. Finally fifteen members, including the church clerk and one deacon, were excluded for protesting against the preaching of the pastor. They went to the schoolroom of Rev. John Winter, over a harness shop on Wood Street, reorganized, and held services during the winter of 1822-1823. Mr. Winter, a regular Baptist minister, preached to them every other Sunday; the alternate Sunday he preached at Bull Creek. In April, 1823, he moved to Bull Creek, but returned to Pittsburgh semi-monthly and continued his preaching. These

excluded people had meanwhile changed their place of meeting to a brick Methodist meeting-house on First Street, near Smithfield Street. Under the directions of Mr. Winter the fifteen wrote a carefully prepared paper, protesting against their exclusion, claiming to be the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, and asserting that the majority had departed from the principles of Baptists, were no longer a Baptist church, and had neither moral nor legitimate right to the church property.

The following specifications were a part of the protest. Rigdon was charged with teaching—

1. That Christians are not under obligations to keep the moral law, it having been abolished by our Saviour.

2. That the Jewish dispensation was not the best one that God might have given to them, for it had made them threefold more the children of hell than they were before.

3. That a change of heart consists merely in a change of views and of baptism.

4. That there is no such thing as religious experience.

5. That saving faith is a mere crediting of the testimony given by the evangelists, such as all have in the truth of any other history.

6. That it is wrong to use the Lord's Prayer, inasmuch as the reign of Christ had already commenced.

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In addition to these charges they said that Mr. Rigdon emphasized the restoration of the ancient order of things, especially with reference to the duty of bringing one's possessions and laying them at the apostles' feet. At this point the hard-headed Baptist fathers thought they smelled a rat, and believed that he purposed devouring their cheese. Rigdon preached this doctrine publicly and urged it in his pastoral visitations. He condemned the regular ministry because they preached for a salary and said "they milched the goats." This was also a reflection upon those to whom they preached, calling them "goats," and not sheep. Commenting on this, Mr. Williams said: "While Rigdon denounced others for milching them, he could without difficulty take down the goats, hide, horns, and all."

This protest was presented July 11, 1823.

A mutual council was called, and met October 11, 1823. Elder Frey was moderator, and Ephraim Estep, clerk. The council decided that the minority were the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, and were entitled to the property. Mr. Rigdon was found guilty of "holding and teaching the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and many other abominable heresies." He was thereupon excluded from the church and deposed from the Baptist ministry.

He and his sympathizers surrendered the property without further resistance; the church found itself back in its home from which it had been driven a



year before. Mr. Winter preached for them a year longer, and after that gave his whole time to the church at Bull Creek.

In Richardson's "Memoirs of Alexander Campbell," Vol. II., p. 99, he says: "A greater degree of intimacy took place between Walter Scott and Rigdon and their respective congregations, so that in 1824 a union was consummated between them. A few members of the Baptist church who refused to unite were then recognized by the committee of the Association as the only legitimate Baptist church in Pittsburgh." This statement is misrepresenting. That there was a union between Scott's church and Rigdon's followers is not to be denied. But if it took place in 1824, as Richardson says it did, it was *after*, and not before the official recognition of the minority. It was also *after* the exclusion of Rigdon from the Baptist church. The simple fact was that after their exclusion Rigdon and his followers joined the church of which Walter Scott was pastor. On the other hand, if Doctor Richardson has made a mistake in his date of 1824 and is correct in the rest of his statement, we know that the minority, who protested and did not unite with Walter Scott's congregation, were officially recognized as the Baptist church. Whichever the mistake Richardson made, there never was a union between Walter Scott's church and the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh. This settles the historic continuity

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of a Baptist church in Pittsburgh from 1812 until now.<sup>1</sup>

Within a year after his exclusion, Rigdon went to the Western Reserve. While in Pittsburgh he acknowledged to a deacon of the Baptist church that he "made up his experience when he joined the Peter's Creek church in order to be received."

Elder Williams says: "He preached wherever he could and did all the mischief he could. In a number of instances he succeeded in forming a party in churches where he had been allowed to preach and by stratagem or force succeeded in securing to said parties the property of the church. Between the time of his exclusion by the Baptists and his avowal of Mormonism he propagated the doctrines of Alexander Campbell and circulated his books and periodicals. His leading error was baptismal regeneration. Then came Arianism, then a belittling of the Holy Spirit."

Two months before Rigdon's exclusion, finding

<sup>1</sup> The original Baptist frame meeting-house of Pittsburgh was replaced by a brick one during the pastorate of Rev. Samuel Williams in 1833. The brick one was destroyed in the great fire of 1845, and another brick one built on the same site. In 1867 a chapel was built on Fourth Avenue, and in 1873 the First and Union churches consolidated, forming the Fourth Avenue Baptist Church; the chapel was added to on the Ross Street side, and the present large edifice was the result. The abandoned brick structure, at the northeast corner of Third and Grant, was used by the Universalists from 1867 until 1880; it then served as a synagogue for about ten years, and after that as "Barracks for the Salvation Army." In 1896 it was reconstructed, and became a business block.



so little sympathy in the Redstone Association, Alexander Campbell transferred his membership and that of the Wellsburg (Virginia) Baptist church, where he was a member, to the Mahoning (Ohio) Association, many of the churches of which were trending toward his views.

On July 4, 1823, he issued the first number of "The Christian Baptist." He purposed calling it "The Christian," but deferred to the opinion of Walter Scott, who thought that the insertion of the word "Baptist" would "disarm prejudice and secure a wider circulation, especially as it was expected to circulate mainly among the Baptists, among whom the elements of reform had for some time been slowly and silently spreading."<sup>1</sup>

The first four numbers had a series of articles by Mr. Scott, entitled "A Divinely Authorized Plan of Teaching the Christian Religion." The paper continued seven years, and then gave way to "The Millennial Harbinger." Its avowed purpose was "chiefly to reform the church and unite the various parties."

In January, 1823, Walter Scott married a member of the Covenanter church, Miss Sarah Whitsett, who afterward joined her husband's congregation. In 1826 he moved to Steubenville, Ohio, where he preached to a small and independent congregation. After his departure serious dissensions arose among

<sup>1</sup> See Baxter's "Life of Scott."

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those whom he left in Pittsburgh. Among his early converts was a young Covenanter, Samuel Church, then twenty-three years old. He had been baptized by Scott, but had joined John Tassey's church, already mentioned. When dissensions threatened their existence, Mr. Church came to the rescue of Mr. Scott's former congregation and restored harmony. It afterward became the First Christian (or Disciple) Church of Pittsburgh. Samuel Church became one of the leading ministers among the Disciples. A son and a daughter of his married a daughter and a son of Walter Scott.

### ***V. The Story of the Mahoning Association 1827 to 1829***

We now leave Pittsburgh to follow the fortunes of Scott, Campbell, and Rigdon. In August, 1819, ten churches from the Beaver Association organized the Mahoning Association on the basis of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.<sup>1</sup> By 1827 it had increased to sixteen churches, all in the Western Reserve except the Wellsburg church that Mr. Campbell joined four years before. These sixteen churches had four hundred and ninety-two members

<sup>1</sup>The Beaver Association was organized at Providence, Beaver County, Pa., Aug. 25, 1809. It extended from Clarion County, Pennsylvania, to Wooster, Ohio, and from Virginia to Lake Erie. The Mahoning and Mohegan Associations were both organized out of it in 1819, and left it with twelve churches and three hundred and forty-one members.

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when they made their annual report to the Association, which met at New Lisbon, August 23, 1827. Among them were the churches at Youngstown, Hubbard, Hiram, Warren, and Palmyra. On his way to the Association Alexander Campbell stopped at Steubenville and asked Walter Scott to accompany him. The Minutes record the fact that "the following teaching brethren being present were invited to a seat in the council: Walter Scott, Samuel Holmes, William West, and Sidney Rigdon." The sermon the first evening was preached by Rigdon, his text being the eighth chapter of John.

At that time his home was in Kirtland, Ohio; and there is circumstantial evidence that even then he was in communication with Joseph Smith, through their mutual friend, Parley P. Pratt. Just thirty days after that sermon was preached the "Book of Mormon" was found, and a little later the first Mormon sermon was preached in Palmyra, N. Y., by this same Rigdon.

Alexander Campbell seems to have been the most influential minister in the Mahoning Association. At the New Lisbon meeting he was appointed to write the corresponding letter, to print and distribute the Minutes, to write a circular letter on itinerant preaching, to be read the next year. He was also appointed to preach the annual sermon at the next Association, which was to meet at Warren.

We now come to what proved to be a very

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important item of business. A traveling evangelist was wanted. It was voted that "all teachers of Christianity present be a committee to nominate a person to travel and labor among the churches and to suggest a plan for the support of the person so appointed." When this committee made its report it was as follows: "Brother Scott is a suitable person for the task, and he is willing, provided the Association concur in his appointment, to devote his whole energies to the work."

The appointment was made. Mr. Scott was to receive the contributions that might be made for the work and report at the next Association. The Association adjourned with "the immersion of some disciples in the creek," and a meeting of the brethren at the Baptist meeting-house "to break bread."

Scott's biographer asks, "Is it not very remarkable that when a committee was appointed, composed of preachers who were members of the Association and of those who were not, to choose an evangelist to travel among the churches, that one should be selected who was not a member of the body, and who neither agreed in his religious views with many who selected him for so important a task, nor took any pains to conceal this difference?" Why remarkable? The man chosen agreed with Campbell and Rigdon in his views, and they were the most influential men on that committee. He was there by Campbell's invitation, and for four years both

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Campbell and Rigdon had been teaching their doctrines among those churches. "In 1825 the New Lisbon and Warren churches had gone over to Campbellism," says Doctor Winter. No, Mr. Baxter, it was not strange that Mr. Scott was elected associational evangelist under those circumstances. It was strange, however, that he accepted and pursued the course that he did. Baxter admits that Scott doubted the propriety of accepting, and after he did accept, he doubted the propriety of pursuing the course that he finally took. Those doubts did him honor. But after he did accept he made up his mind to preach his peculiar doctrines without any reservation. Wherever he made converts he baptized them and administered the Lord's Supper. I find nowhere any record of his ordination.

Among the people who turned to Walter Scott in large numbers were the New Lights. Most of them had been Baptists, Presbyterians, or Methodists, who had turned from their respective churches and united under the one name of "*Christ-ians*." They were often known where they dwelt as "Open Communionists." One of the "teaching brethren" of the New Lights was at the session of the Mahoning Association, and voted for Mr. Scott when he was first elected its evangelist. That Association seemed to give almost anybody a right to sit and vote in its session.

The man was Joseph Gaston. Two years after



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voting for Mr. Scott, Gaston was baptized by him "for the remission of sins."

Was this a re-immersion? If so, his former immersion was regarded as unsatisfactory, and probably because it was not "for the remission of sins." If it was not a re-immersion, we see the strange course of a Baptist Association receiving as one of its own number a man who not only was not a member of a Baptist church, but who had not even been baptized.

In the "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," edited by Dr. J. Newton Brown, there is an article on "The Disciples of Christ," written by Alexander Campbell in 1833. Campbell says: "After some ten years' debating and contending for the Bible alone and the apostles' doctrine (in the Redstone Association), Alexander Campbell and the church to which he belonged united with the Mahoning Association, that Association being more favorable to his views of reform."

If that was true in 1823 (when Campbell joined the Mahoning Association), it is easy to understand that by 1827 Mr. Scott found the fields white unto the harvest. I quote again from Mr. Campbell's article: "Not till after great numbers began to act upon these principles" (referring to his teachings in his paper, "The Christian Baptist") "was there any attempt towards separation. After the Mahoning Association appointed Mr. Walter Scott

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an evangelist, in 1827, and when great numbers began to be immersed into Christ under his labors, and new churches began to be erected by him and other laborers in the field, did the Baptist Associations begin to declare non-fellowship with the brethren of the reformation. Thus by constraint, not of choice, they were obliged to form societies out of these communities that split upon the ground of adherence to the apostles' doctrine." Having given Mr. Campbell's own version of the situation, we proceed. ✓

By spring, in 1812, the work of Mr. Scott and the resultant troubles in so many Baptist churches had been reported far and near. Alexander Campbell sent his father into Ohio to investigate. He went, saw, approved, and remained to help Mr. Scott. Meetings had been held thus far in New Lisbon, East Fairfield, Warren, and Austintown, where a church of one hundred and ten members had been organized by Scott.

Baxter says, "Both Baptist houses of worship at Warren and Hubbard had *passed quietly into the hands of the Disciples*, and he went next to Sharon, Pa." This is hardly in harmony with Mr. Campbell's statement as to the beginnings of separation, for the Associational "anathemas" were not pronounced until after this. I presume, however, that so long as meeting-houses passed quietly into the hands of the reformers they would be in no haste for an organic separation. The testimony from these

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two prominent Disciples does not seem quite to agree, or possibly one tells more than the other. However, when Mr. Scott reached Sharon he held meetings, baptized converts, and departed. After his departure the Baptist church refused to receive these converts, on the ground that they had not been before the church, related their experience, and been received by the church for baptism. The result was a division in the church. Thomas Campbell was sent for. He came and in vain tried to persuade the church to receive them. In a week or two the Beaver (Pa.) Association met in Sharon and indorsed the action of the church. I think that it was in this same year, June, 1828, that the Beaver Association issued a circular condemning the Mahoning Association and Mr. Campbell as disbelievers of many of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. In their writings the Disciples refer to this as "the Beaver Anathema." It remains a fact, however, that the Sharon meeting-house did not "pass quietly into the hands of the Disciples," as William Baxter so pleasantly expresses it. The pastor of the Warren church, when it "passed quietly over," was Rev. Adam Bently, and he had gone with the church. He and Mr. Scott now went to Sharon and organized a church that Baxter calls a "Disciple church," and he adds that "the Sharon people called it a Campbellite church." About seventeen of its thirty members were from the Baptist church.



## THE MAHONING ASSOCIATION

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The Mahoning Association met in Warren during August, 1828. It was still a Baptist Association so far as its name went. Mr. Scott was appointed evangelist for another year. In 1829 the meeting was in Austintown. Then and there the Association formally voted to disband. Four of the churches had withstood Mr. Campbell and Mr. Scott, and had previously withdrawn and joined the Beaver Association. When the motion to disband was made Mr. Campbell rose to oppose it, but yielded to Mr. Scott's request not to do so. It passed unanimously.

Baxter says: "The action taken at Austintown may be regarded as the formal separation from the Baptists. . . Those Baptists who had embraced the new views, together with the new converts made, were called Campbellites, and by many Scottites; but after the dissolution of the Association, which was really brought about by the efforts of Scott, they were called Disciples."

Mr. Scott admitted that at his suggestion a Mr. John Henry had made the motion, and at his request Alexander Campbell did not oppose it. Perhaps it will not be fair to judge a man who lived in the first quarter of the nineteenth century by the principles of interdenominational comity that prevail in the first quarter of the twentieth century. But to-day no minister of the gospel could do what Mr. Scott did in the Mahoning Association without meriting and receiving the severest condemnation.

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Later in life he wrote an essay, entitled "The Parable of the Ships." By the ship "The Church of God" he meant those independent Baptists who first laid aside all human creeds and strove to conform to the primitive models. To another ship he gave one more sail than the Independent Baptists had. This he called the "Restoration"; it represented the Disciples. He described the "Regular Baptist hull" as having a large chasm in it, "which Alexander Campbell hammered out and through which he leaped and his associates with him." In the last paragraph he refers to himself in these words, "Who is that lean man behind Alexander Campbell? No names, sir. If he leaped from the chasm first, bearing along with him the flag of the Union, he is to be borne with." This figure of speech implies that he must have been a Regular Baptist before he made the leap. The facts of this paper conclusively prove that he never was a Regular Baptist. His language is either wholly figurative or he may possibly have joined the disaffected church at Canfield, Ohio, after his removal from Steubenville in the first year of his service as associational evangelist. This church was nominally a Baptist church until the Association disbanded, less than two years later.

I have no proof that he ever did join it. It seems necessary to guess that he did in order to explain his language, for his employment as an evangelist

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among departing Baptists would hardly justify him in representing himself as leaping from the Regular Baptist hull unless he regarded himself as being on board in the character of an enemy who is to aid one of the crew in scuttling the ship.

In 1835 Mr. Scott moved to Kentucky. In 1844 he returned to Pittsburgh, where he published "The Protestant Unionist," a weekly paper, and became the pastor of the First Christian Church in Allegheny City, December 1, 1848. The next April his wife died. The following year he married Miss Annie B. Allen, of Mayslick, Ky., and took the principalship of a woman's school in Covington. The second wife lived but four years, and at her death he gave up his principalship. He married a third wife, Mrs. Eliza Sandige, of Mason County, Ky., and made that county his home until his death, April 23, 1861. By voice and pen he never ceased to give every possible impetus to the progress of the principles he espoused when he was first a resident of Pittsburgh. Alexander Campbell said of him: "Next to my father, he was my most cordial and indefatigable fellow-laborer in the origin and progress of the present reformation."

### ***VI. Joseph Smith's Great "Find"***

When Rigdon preached at the Association in New Lisbon his home was in Kirtland, Ohio. Just thirty days after that sermon, in September, 1827, Joseph

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Smith proclaimed his finding of "The Golden Bible," better known as "The Book of Mormon," at the little village of Manchester, six miles from Palmyra, N. Y. Rigdon soon went thither, professed immediate conversion to the "find," and straightway preached the first Mormon sermon. It was preached in Palmyra, and showed a remarkable amount of information for a *new* convert. It was said that he seemed to know more about it than Smith himself. Abundant reason for this will be shown.

Smith claimed to have been directed by an angel to the burial-place of a stone box, in which was a volume six inches thick and composed of thin gold leaves, eight by seven inches, fastened together by three gold rings. The writing on them was called "Reformed Egyptian." There was also a pair of "supernatural spectacles"; two crystals, that Smith called "Urim and Thummim," were set in a silver bow. When Smith put these on he claimed to be able to translate the Reformed Egyptian language. I have heard my father-in-law, then nineteen years old, and who lived until 1904, who knew Smith, say that he was scarcely able to read and could not write. He was a quick-witted, lazy, superstitious fellow, who spent his time in digging for treasures and locating springs for wells with a divining rod. He was just the man for Rigdon to attempt to use as a tool, although in the long run he proved too shrewd

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for his former master. It probably will never be known why Rigdon did not take permanent first place in Mormonism. It is certain that Smith developed better qualities of leadership, and it is probable that Rigdon never dared offend Smith for fear of exposure as to *their secret*.

Neither Smith nor Rigdon had money to publish this "Golden Bible." They succeeded in interesting a well-to-do farmer named Martin Harris, who furnished the means. Oliver Cowdery was employed as an amanuensis. He wrote what Smith dictated to him from the farther side of a concealing curtain. In 1830 the book was printed, and with it a sworn statement by Cowdery, Harris, and a David Whitmer that an angel of God had shown them the plates of which the book purported to be a translation. Some years later these three men renounced Mormonism, and declared said sworn statement false. I once opened the Book of Mormon that lay upon the pulpit in the Mormon Tabernacle at Salt Lake City; upon its page was this sworn statement by these three men, but their recantation was not there. The Mormons explain the disappearance of the "golden leaves" by assuming that an angel took them away. As a matter of fact we have only Joseph Smith's word for it, aside from the above statement, that they ever existed. In spite of this a leading Mormon told me, as he and I stood by Brigham Young's grave, that they had two Bibles

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of equal authority. One contained the Old and New Testament; the other is the Book of Mormon.

#### ***VII. Sidney Rigdon was Joseph Smith's "Angel"***

Now we return to Pittsburgh. In 1761 Solomon Spaulding was born in Ashford, Conn., and was graduated by Dartmouth College in 1785. Later in life he lived in New Salem and Conneaut, Ohio. There he wrote a manuscript which he called "The Manuscript Found." He read it to numerous of his relatives and friends.

Its leading characters bore such names as Mormon, Maroni, Lamanite, and Nephi. It divided the population of this continent into two classes, the righteous and idolatrous, and told an imaginary story of the discovery of their history as recorded on a manuscript that was centuries ago concealed in the earth. It was full of wars and rumors of wars, and presented a record of the preaching of Christianity in America during the first century after Christ. Mr. Spaulding being a minister and familiar with Bible history, made his romance correspond closely to the biblical records as their sequel. In 1812 he moved to Pittsburgh. Robert Patterson had a printing establishment here; his foreman was Silas Engles; his employee, and later his partner, was a Mr. Lambdin. Spaulding desired Patterson to publish his work, but was unable to guarantee



the expenses if the book should prove a failure. Patterson testified that he saw said manuscript and told Engles to print it if Spaulding furnished security for expenses. He farther testified that Spaulding was unable to do so, and that he supposed Engles finally returned the manuscript to its author. Spaulding moved to Amity, Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1814, and died there in 1816. Joseph Miller, of Amity, was an intimate friend of Spaulding. He heard him read much of his manuscript, and testified (see "Pittsburgh Telegraph," in 1879) to Spaulding's telling him that while he was writing a preface for the book the manuscript was spirited away; that a Sidney Rigdon was suspected of taking it. Miller also said that when he read the Book of Mormon he at once recognized Spaulding's story. Redick McKee, of Washington County, bears the same testimony, and says that Rigdon was employed in Patterson's office. Some of Rigdon's friends deny that he was ever employed there, but Mrs. R. J. Eichbaum, who died in Pittsburgh in 1882, was clerk in the Pittsburgh post-office from 1811 to 1816, her father being postmaster. She gave testimony to the intimacy between Rigdon and Lambdin, their coming to the office together, and Engles telling her that "Rigdon was always hanging about the printing-office." It is also a matter of fact that Lambdin became Patterson's business partner in 1818. Spaulding's widow testified that

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Rigdon was connected with the office in some way. It seems evident that Rigdon was about the office, to say the least.

Six years later he returned to Pittsburgh as the pastor of the Baptist church. Lambdin died in 1825, Engles in 1827. Rigdon's pastorate was while both were yet alive, and he was intimate with both. Note particularly that the proclamation of Smith's "find" was not made until Lambdin and Engles were dead.

Rev. John Winter, M. D., known to many in western Pennsylvania, testified that he was in Rigdon's study in Pittsburgh in the winter of 1822-1823; that Rigdon took from his desk a large manuscript and said in substance, "A Presbyterian minister, Mr. Spaulding, whose health failed, brought this to the printer to see if it would pay to publish it. It is a romance of the Bible." Rev. A. J. Bonsall, LITT. D., recently pastor of the Baptist church in Rochester, Pa., and now in Allegheny, Pa., tells me that Doctor Winter, who was his stepfather, often referred to this incident, saying that the manuscript purported to be a history of the American Indian, and that Rigdon said he got it from the printers. Mrs. Mary W. Irvine, of Sharon, Pa., Doctor Winter's daughter, says: "I have frequently heard my father speak of Rigdon's having Spaulding's manuscript; that he said he got it from the printer to read as a curiosity. As such he showed it to my father, but then seemed



to have no intention of using it, as he evidently afterward did. Father always said that Rigdon helped Smith in his scheme by revising and transforming this manuscript into the Mormon Bible."

As late as 1879 a Mrs. Amos Dunlap, of Warren, Ohio, wrote of having visited the Rigdons when she was young and of his taking a large manuscript from his trunk and becoming greatly absorbed in it. His wife threatened to burn it, but he said, "No, indeed, you will not; this will be a great thing some day."

In 1820 the Widow Spaulding married Mr. Davidson, of Hartwick, Otsego County, New York. In May, 1839, the Boston "Recorder" published a statement from her made to and recorded by Rev. D. R. Austin, of Monson, Mass., to the effect that a Mormon preacher took a copy of the Mormon Bible to New Salem, Ohio, where her husband had lived, and written much of his manuscript, and read from it at a public meeting. She said that many of the older people immediately recognized it as her husband's romance, and that his brother, John Spaulding, arose then and there and protested against such a use of his late brother's writings. Rigdon wrote to the Boston "Recorder" an emphatic and coarse denial of this fact, and said that he had never heard of such a man as Spaulding. The reader may judge whether he ever had or not. In August, 1880, "Scribner's Monthly" published some

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testimony from Solomon Spaulding's daughter, Mrs. M. S. McKinstry, of Washington, D. C. She certifies to the same facts, and bears testimony to the parallelism between the Book of Mormon and her father's romance. Mrs. President Garfield's father, Mr. Z. Rudolph, knew Rigdon well, and says that "during the winter previous to the appearance of the Mormon Bible Rigdon spent weeks away from home, gone no one knew where. When he returned he seemed very much preoccupied, talked in a dreamy, imaginative way, and puzzled his listeners. His joining the Mormons so quickly, made his neighbors sure that he was in the secret of the authorship of the Book of Mormon." The "book" was printed in the office of "The Wayne Sentinel," Palmyra, N. Y. The editor was Pomeroy Tucker. In 1867 he printed a book, "Origin and Progress of Mormonism." In it he says that during the summer of 1827 (the "Leaves of Gold" were found in September, 1827) a stranger made several mysterious visits at Smith's home. "*He was afterward recognized as Rigdon, who afterward preached the first Mormon sermon in Palmyra.*"

This statement is corroborated by Mrs. Dr. Horace Eaton, who lived in Palmyra for more than thirty years. A great deal of similar testimony has been secured from many others. As early as 1835 Mr. E. D. Howe, of Painesville, Ohio, printed the full testimony of eight reliable witnesses, such

persons as John Spaulding and wife Martha, Henry Lake, a former business associate of Solomon Spaulding, Oliver Smith, Aaron Wright, and Nahum Howard, all of Conneaut, Ohio. They all certified that the Book of Mormon and Spaulding's romance were in substance identical. Finally, Rigdon's brother-in-law, Rev. Adam Bently, and Alexander Campbell both testify ("The Millennial Harbinger," 1844) that as much as two years before the Mormon Bible made its appearance, Rigdon told them that "such a book was coming out, the manuscript of which had been found engraved on gold plates." In spite of this, Rigdon claimed that he first heard of the Book of Mormon from Parley P. Pratt in August, 1830. In the light of this evidence whence think ye came the Book of Mormon and what is its claim to divine authority? Was not Rigdon Joseph Smith's angel?

### ***VIII. Spaulding's Oberlin Manuscript***

In Oberlin College, Ohio, there is a genuine manuscript written by Mr. Spaulding. It was secured in 1834 by D. P. Hurlburt from the Spaulding family and by him given to E. D. Howe, author of "Mormonism Unveiled." L. L. Rice bought out Howe's business, and later this manuscript, with other of Rice's possessions, was sent to Honolulu. In 1884, while out there, President James H. Fairchild, of Oberlin, accidentally discovered this manu-

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script, and together with Rice, compared it with the Book of Mormon. Doctor Fairchild then published the statement that they "could detect no resemblance in general detail. Some other explanation of the origin of the Book of Mormon must be found if an explanation is required." This was accepted by the Mormons with delight; they published it far and wide, and still rely upon it as proof that Smith's "find" was genuine. They even publish said manuscript, that all who run may read and see that there is no resemblance between it and their "Bible." In October, 1895, President Fairchild had learned not to assume that the Oberlin manuscript was the only manuscript that Spaulding ever wrote. He then was willing to certify only that the Oberlin manuscript was not the original of the Book of Mormon. By 1901 he went still farther and wrote thus:

With regard to the manuscript of Mr. Spaulding now in the library of Oberlin College, I have never stated, and know of no one who can state, that it is the only manuscript which Spaulding wrote, or that it is certainly the one which has been supposed to be the original of the Book of Mormon. The discovery of this manuscript does not prove that there may not have been another, which became the basis of the Book of Mormon. The use which has been made of statements emanating from me as implying the contrary of the above is entirely unwarranted.

(Signed) JAMES H. FAIRCHILD.

Had Doctor Fairchild read or remembered Howe's "Mormonism Unveiled," published in 1834,

he might have known that Howe published a fair synopsis of what is now known as the Oberlin manuscript, after showing the original to Spaulding's friends, and that they then and there admitted it to be a manuscript of Spaulding's, but not the one which they asserted to be the original of the then newly published Book of Mormon.

They also repeated that Spaulding told them he had changed his original plan of writing and gone back farther with his dates; also that he had adopted the old Bible style to make his story seem more ancient.<sup>1</sup> Disbelievers in Joseph Smith's "find" have never claimed that the Book of Mormon was a plagiarism of the Oberlin manuscript, and all the powder used by the Mormons on that subject is a wasted explosive. President Fairchild's first assumption of such a claim made possible the whole line of boastings by the Mormons, samples of which are as follows: From an editorial in "The Deseret News" of July 19, 1900, "The discovery of the manuscript written by Mr. Spaulding and its deposit in the library at Oberlin College, Ohio, . . . has so completely demolished the theory once relied upon by superficial minds that the Book of Mormon was concocted from that manuscript; that it has been entirely abandoned by all opponents of Mormonism except the densely ignorant or the unscrupulously dishonest." Again, on May 14, 1901, from the same

<sup>1</sup> See Howe's "Mormonism Unveiled," p. 288.

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paper, "It is only the densely ignorant, the totally depraved, and clergymen of different denominations afflicted with anti-Mormon rabies who still use the Spaulding story to account for the origin of the Book of Mormon."

One has but to read what Howe wrote in 1834 as to the character of the changes Spaulding made in his *second* manuscript, the one he took to Pittsburgh and left with the printers, received again for correction and read to his neighbors while he lived in Amity, from 1812 till 1816, took a second time to the Pittsburgh printers and left with them, the one that he told John Miller, of Amity, he believed had been stolen by a man named Sidney Rigdon, who was about the office (of Patterson), and then read the historical parts of the Book of Mormon. The points of identity will be apparent. Note also that the interpolated religious matter is in the exact language of the King James version of the Bible, though claimed by Joseph Smith to have been written centuries before King James' day. Note again the teachings of the very things for which Rigdon was excluded by the Baptists. Still further note that millennialism, baptism for the remission of sins, a common ownership of property, the limitation of faith to the intellect, and other doctrinal peculiarities are characteristic of the religious teachings of the Mormons and of their Bible, just as they were of Rigdon when he was excluded by the



Baptists and came into sympathy with Campbell and Scott.

The brand was so deeply burned in by him before he deposited his papers with Joseph Smith that nearly a century has failed to obliterate it. What about those names found in common in both the Mormon Bible and Spaulding's second manuscript, names such as Nephi, Mormon, Nephites, Lehi, Lamanites, Laban, Zarahemla, Amlicites? Are all these mere coincidences?

What about this testimony from Bennett's "Mormonism Exposed," published in 1842? But who was John C. Bennett? A quartermaster-general of Illinois, a mayor of Nauvoo, a master in chancery for Hancock County, a trustee of the "University of Nauvoo," a man who says he joined the Mormons in order to expose them. Bennett says (pp. 123, 124): "The Book of Mormon was originally written by the Rev. Solomon Spaulding, A. M., as a romance, and entitled the "Manuscript Found," and placed by him in the printing-office of Patterson & Lambdin, in the city of Pittsburgh, from whence it was taken by a *conspicuous Mormon divine* and remodeled by adding the religious portion, placed by him in Smith's possession, and then published to the world, as the testimony exemplifies. *This I have from the confederation*, and of its perfect correctness there is not the shadow of a doubt. There never were any plates of the Book of Mormon

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excepting what were seen by the spiritual and not the natural eyes of the witnesses. The story of the plates is all chimerical." When Bennett wrote that he hoped that Rigdon and the Pratts would leave the Mormons and join him in his crusade against the Mormons. Hence he did not give Rigdon away by name.

#### ***IX. Conclusion***

The rest of Rigdon's story is soon told. Smith and his New York converts joined Rigdon and his followers in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1828. A year later, at Hiram, Ohio, both men were dragged from their beds by an indignant mob of citizens and given a coat of tar and feathers.

Rigdon was made temporarily insane by this treatment. Another year passed and he was elected one of the three Mormon presidents, Smith and Williams being the two others. From time to time emigrant parties of Mormons had gone from the East, Ohio especially, and settled in Missouri. In 1838 the Mormon bank at Kirtland failed, and dragged down with it their mill and store. Suspicions and indignation were so strong that both Smith and Rigdon fled to their followers in Caldwell County, Missouri. Then came a record of crime and bloodshed. There were battles with the State militia, and finally the arrest of Smith and Rigdon, charged with "treason, murder, and felony."

## CONCLUSION

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They were tried by court martial, for the government at Washington regarded the situation as of sufficient seriousness to term it a civil war. It was proven that Rigdon advocated persecution and bloodshed; that he urged death to all enemies of Mormonism and to all cowardly Mormons. Both men were found guilty and condemned to death, November 1, 1838, but both escaped from jail before the sentence could be executed.

At their arrest fifteen hundred of their followers fled to Hancock County, Illinois. After their escape they joined these followers, and the town of Nauvoo was started. A charter was secured from the Illinois legislature; the Nauvoo militia was organized, and Smith was the commander. He was also the mayor of the town, and in the religious affairs no one surpassed him. Things seemed to flourish for six years.

Then came a crisis. The governor ordered into service several hundred men and had Smith, his brother Hyrum, and a few others arrested and placed in the jail at Carthage, Ill. In the afternoon of June 27, 1844, a mob of about one hundred and fifty men with blackened faces broke into the jail. They shot the Smith brothers dead and severely wounded one of the other prisoners, John Taylor.

Four years after that, in the spring of 1847, Brigham Young and one hundred and forty-three

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others started on that journey to the Rocky Mountains that resulted in the founding of Salt Lake City and the Mormon colonization of Utah.

But Rigdon did not go with them. At Nauvoo he and Smith had become enemies. It is said that Smith had offered most serious insult to Rigdon's daughter. However that was, Mr. Rigdon there deserted the Mormons and brought his family to Franklin County, Pennsylvania, where he lived in obscurity for many years. He died July 14, 1876, at the home of his daughter, in Friendship, Allegheny County, New York.

Sidney's oldest brother, L. Rigdon, M. D., of Hamilton, Ohio, believed that Sidney was deranged, the result of a concussion of his brain in boyhood, he having been dragged by a running horse. This is probably the most charitable view that can be taken of this son of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. That he had ability none would deny. That he was either a fraud or a fanatic, or both, is equally apparent to those who know the facts of his life.

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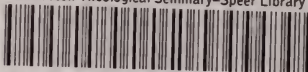
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